

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION  
MINUTES – JULY 16, 2003

Chairman Tim Lambert called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes for April and June Meetings**

- Commissioner Adams submitted changes to the April 2003 Meeting minutes.
- April 2003 Meeting minutes were approved with submitted changes.
- Chairman Lambert requested that the June 2003 Meeting minutes reflect Commissioner Gregory as an attendee. June 2003 Meeting minutes were approved with a change.

**WHS Administrative Program Update**

- Presentation by Mr. Robert Beyer on the behalf of Mark Hoffman, Associate Director of Administrative Program.
- WHS Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2004
  - 1) WHS made several budget cuts. Mark Hoffman submitted several proposals for the FY 2004 to Secretary Franks.
  - 2) Wildlife and Heritage Service's general funds were significantly reduced for FY 2004. The CREP was cut from the budget.
- Question and Answers:
  - 1) Commissioner Adams asked if the reduction in general funds affects matching funds.
    - (a) WHS can continue to use matching funds. Assistant Secretary Mike Slattery mentioned that the proposals were accepted by Secretary Franks and sent to the Department of Budget Management (DBM).
    - (b) Governor Ehrlich froze 10% of all general funds statewide for FY04. Also, State agencies were asked to identify a 7½% reduction for FY05.

**AP Migratory Canada Goose Status Report**

- Presentation by Bill Harvey, Game Bird Section Leader
- Mr. Bill Harvey handed out "A Breeding Pair Survey of Canada Geese in Northern Quebec – 2003" [Attachment A].
- Since 1993, this study has been done the same way. Observers fly low levels of transects at 100 feet above the ground on the Ungava Peninsula, which is the primary nesting area for our migratory birds. The US Fish and Wildlife Service provided the pilot and the plane for this study.
  - 1) Mr. Harvey outlined several points from the survey. The AP Canada geese pairs decreased by 5% from last year. Given the precision of the survey, it is basically no change.
  - 2) With regards to total population, especially along the Hudson Bay since many birds including the Resident and Mississippi Valley geese return to this area to molt, observers estimated that the population was close to a million and this year down by 20%. The reduction in the population may be due to the survey being conducted a week earlier than normal. The later period of time allows for more molt migrants to arrive. In conclusion, the population is in good standing.
- Question and Answers
  - 1) Commissioner Gregory asked if the helicopter would be more practical to use for your observation.
    - (a) The observers have to cover vast amount of areas and it is incredible expensive. For example, that helicopter cost \$1,000 dollars per hour and unfortunately, the helicopter does not have the range that the plane would have.
    - (b) Normally, the observers are at 100 feet above the ground so it is fairly easy to see the geese. In addition, the observers will record the geese on a tape recorder and a computer.

**Waterfowl Season Proposals**

- Presentation by Larry Hindman, Waterfowl Project Leader
  - 1) Mr. Hindman handed out the Preliminary 2003 Waterfowl Seasons and Bag Limits [Attachment B].
  - 2) The Atlantic Flyway Council will meet next week and staff will have additional biological information from breeding ground surveys to consider.
    - (i) Typically, the September Teal Season dates are published in the Hunting Guide. This was not done this year because of the uncertainty of the breeding conditions in the prairies. Therefore, staff decided not to publish the September Teal Season until the completion of the teals' breeding cycle. The population was good this year for the North Central U.S. and Prairie Canada.

- (ii) The canvasback breeding population increased. Last year, the canvasback season was closed. This year, USFWS reviewed the numbers with the anticipated 100,000 canvasback surplus. Restricted Canvasback Season across the Country may be established come this hunting season.
- (iii) Mr. Hindman summarized the Waterfowl Season Proposals. The Waterfowl Hearing will be scheduled before the next WAC meeting.

- Questions and Answers

- 1) Mr. Beyer asked if the Service decides not to provide two per day AP Canada Geese limits during the last 10 days, would the Service allow the 50 days season. The Atlantic Flyway Council would not have a problem with 50 days season. Staff has to wait until the Service decides.
- 2) Commissioner Freeland asked how long would it take for the State to implement regulations to allow the use of electric calls and unplugged shotguns for snow goose. Once it is approved through the federal system, the Department can implement the use of the electric calls and unplugged shotguns. The Impact Statement has been written but the lawyers have to sign this statement. When the Impact Statement is approved, then the Service will have a set of regulations to propose.
- 3) Commissioner Adams asked about the status of the Mute Swans Environmental Assessment (EA). The comment period ended on July 16<sup>th</sup>. Mr. John Trapp from the Service mentioned to Mr. Hindman that the EA should be completed by the end of July. Several staff from the Service has to sign the EA.
- 4) Commissioner Adams read that an organization is offering a lot of money to people to get photographs of staff using lethal methods to reduce mute swans population. Staff discussed this because it is possible; however, staff is doing this discreetly. Again, there are no guarantees since staff is on public waters.
- 5) Commissioner Freeland asked if Resident Canada Geese population continues to grow despite the liberal season; does the Department have recommendations to decrease the population to 30,000. The Department has been authorized to increase the bag limit to eight during the September Season; the Department will probably increase the bag limit for the 2004-2005 Hunting Season. Unfortunately, the Department received the authorization too late to implement the change for the 2003-2004 Hunting Season. The Department suggested the usage of a general depredation permit for the AFC in order to streamline the federal permitting process so a farmer could manage this problem when it is occurring and not wait six weeks for a permit after a farmer's crop is damage.
- 6) Commissioner Adams asked if anybody in the State is gathering the Resident Canada Geese during molt. Yes, Blackwater Refuge has gathered these birds during the molt. The U.S. Army at Fort Meade and a golf course in Worcester have also collected these birds during the molt. Such decision is left up to the landowner; however, the landowner must receive a federal permit and state authorization to use lethal methods for reducing goose population on his or her property. The only requirement we have is to donate the meat to a charitable organization.
- 7) Commissioner King after reviewing the goose population asked what type of effect does a closed season have on the rebound population. It is very effective, because most of the mortality in Canada goose population is due to hunter harvest. In fact, Canada geese have a high survival rate and in favorable conditions, they are very productive. In 1995, when the season was closed with some modest liberalization, the population increased.

- Motion

- 1) Motion to have the Wildlife Advisory Commission to accept these proposals.
  - (a) Commissioner Gregory seconded the motion. Commissioner Lamp sent his vote in favor of this motion. The motion was passed.

### **Legislative Concepts Finalized**

- Presentation by Robert Beyer Game Program Associate Director
- The WHS legislative concepts were compiled and submitted to Director Paul A. Peditto and Mark Hoffman.
  - 1) Director Peditto and Associate Director Mark Hoffman will be reviewing these concepts with the Department's Legislative Personnel.
  - 2) When the legislative personnel approve the concepts, then Secretary Franks will evaluate them before making a decision to approve or disapprove.
  - 3) At the last meeting, the Commission decided on the concepts submitted.
  - 4) The Department has not received the date from the Governor's Office as to when the legislative concepts are due.

### **State Forest and Park Service Update**

- No report

#### **Natural Resources Police Update**

- Presentation by Sergeant Ingerson
- NRP Activities, June 17, 2003 through July 14, 2003 [Attachment C]
  - 1) Sergeant Ingerson outlined few of the incidents recorded in [Attachment C].

#### **MSA Update**

- Chairman Lambert mentioned the MSA Banquet that is scheduled for August 22<sup>nd</sup>. Please notify Tracey as to whether you will be attending this year's MSA Banquet

#### **Maryland Farm Bureau Report**

- Mr. DeMatteo mentioned that Maryland Farm Bureau Wildlife Committee will be meeting with representatives from DNR next week. Mr. DeMatteo attended a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Workshop in Allegany County on rotation grazing. There is a lot of concern about an individual farmer located in Allegany County about deer damage to specialty grasses. There is a top of the line environmental stewardship on this farm. The orchid and the specialty grasses are located on the same farm. The farmer is requesting for more Deer Management Permits (DMPs).
  - 1) DMPs are for commercial agricultural crops. The DMP will cover the farm and not a particular crop.
  - 2) Typically, WHS issues several permits to individuals and the permits are not all being used.

#### **Old Business**

- Chairman Lambert and Commissioner Lamp are still working on the concepts for the Urban Wildlife Subcommittee Proposal. Commissioners should e-mail Chairman Lambert and Commissioner Lamp his or her comments.
  - 1) Chairman Lambert added that he spoke to Gary Allen former Mayor of Bowie. Bowie's constituencies are putting together a wildlife plan. Mr. Allen would like to come and speak to this Commission regarding implementing Urban Wildlife Plan throughout the State. Chairman Lambert asked the Commissioners if they would like to hear from Mr. Allen. Mr. Allen sent Chairman Lambert a copy of Bowie's Wildlife Plan and Chairman Lambert requested more copies for the Commissioners.
  - 2) Chairman Adams will e-mail and mail the Commissioners his concepts.
- Commissioner Adams asked about the status of the Bear Management Plan.
  - 1) The Bear Management Plan is due to come out in October. Staff is working on compiling a 10-year plan.

#### **New Business**

- Nuisance Black Bear Response Plan has been implemented in Western Maryland. Staff had to euthanized a female nuisance black bear in the Deep Creek area. The female bear was easily identified due to a previous injury. The bear will be mounted for the Information and Education Program.
- Commissioner Adams asked if New Jersey had conducted an Attitude Survey of residents regarding bears. Commissioner Adams noticed recent comments 3-1 people were in favor of a bear hunt in New Jersey; however, Commissioner Adams was not sure if this information was from a web page or actually a survey. New Jersey just announced their proposal for bear hunt in December for a week-long.
- Motion
  - 1) The statue requires that the election of a Chairman to be elected each year.
  - 2) Chairman Lambert asked if anyone has nomination. Vice-Chairman Adams nominated Mr. Tim Lambert for Chairman and Commissioner Freeland seconded that motion.
  - 3) Mr. Tim Lambert accepted the position for Chairman. Commissioner Gregory motions that the nomination to be closed. Commissioners agreed to accept Mr. Lambert as Chairman of the Wildlife Advisory Commission.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

#### **Attendance**

Members:	T. Lambert, L. Adams, W. Freeland, R. Gregory, M. King
Guests:	C. DeMatteo
Staff:	B. Beyer, K. Blizzard, B. Harvey, L. Hindman, P. Jayne, B. King, L. Ingerson, M. Slattery, T. Spencer
Absent:	C. Dollar, G. Fratz, K. Jones, C. Garner, J. Lamp